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EDITORIAL.

IN the death of Professor James D. Dana, American geology loses its most eminent representative. With due recognition of the preëminence of others in their chosen lines, no one has stood before the scientific world for the last three decades so widely recognized as the foremost general geologist of our hemisphere as Professor Dana. The period of his activity has stretched over a full half century. From the time of the publication of his great work on the results of the Wilkes Exploring Expedition, his eminent ability has been recognized, and the appearance of his manuals of geology and mineralogy, which soon followed this, gave him a position of unequalled influence among the teachers and students of those sciences in this country. Upon these works his reputation chiefly rests. Owing to the delicacy of his health his field work was limited, and subsequent to the Wilkes Expedition, which gave him so comprehensive a familiarity with the great features of the earth, his personal field investigations were chiefly confined to the region adjacent to his home. His main work was that of compilation, interpretation and organization, and in this delicate field he showed great judgment and discretion. As we hope to publish a full and appropriate memoir at an early date, and as we give in this number a sketch of his characteristics as a teacher, prepared by an admiring pupil, it would be unfitting here to attempt a full analysis of his conspicuous services or his abilities. He preserved his activity to the end of his life, fourscore years ~~and ten~~ and two, in a remarkable degree. The revision of his *Manual of Geology*, but just issued from the press, is a conspicuous illustration of this. But his activity did not rest even here, as it might very fittingly have done after so arduous a task. In a

letter to Mr. Leverett, only two days before his death, he added to the immediate purpose of his communication a discussion of the mode of deposition of the loess. By permission this is here added because of its interest as one of the latest, possibly indeed the very last, scientific discussion which he committed to writing. C.

[Extract from a letter written by Professor James D. Dana to Mr. Frank Leverett, dated April 12, 1895, but two days before his death.]

"With regard to the eolian work along valley plains, I think great caution is necessary because eolian work is of a fitful kind. The more powerful winds blow in gusts, or rather a succession of them, and each of the gusts is of rather narrow limit; and in each gust great velocity is succeeded by a decline in which the depositions vary accordingly as to coarse and fine and limit. Making loess—unstratified—by the winds would require a steady breeze sufficient to move the light earth or sand long in a common direction, but too near unvarying in force or velocity to produce alternations from coarse to fine. It is an even kind of work that winds are not often fit for. They heap up at the slightest provocation, strike the ground and glance off when of greatest force. It takes something of a breeze to even start the dust of a road, because the dust is 2000 times heavier than the air and the air near the ground slips over the surface readily without disturbing it. Excuse me for thus discoursing on wind work.

"Do you know what is the size of the largest pebbles taken up by a storm wind from a level surface and carried, as it carries sand, for a few yards? The houses in the track of some of the great western gales must have windows sometimes broken in this way; and perhaps their owners, if reliable, could give some facts worth knowing."

* * *

AN additional loss has been suffered by geology in the recent passing of Professor Henry B. Nason. While primarily a chemist and mineralogist, Professor Nason was an earnest and conscientious student and teacher of geological phenomena. An exceptionally wide traveler, his personal familiarity with American and foreign deposits was unusually extensive, and gave to his instruction breadth and balance. His primary geological interest lay in the field of volcanic phenomena. Although an

author and an editor of chemical and mineralogical works, his great modesty withheld him from publication in geological lines, so that it was chiefly as a teacher that his wide observations were made serviceable. The writer owes to Professor Nason, as his first teacher in geology, a debt of gratitude for the initial awakening of what has become the dominant interest of his life. Professor Nason was one of the founders of the American Geological Society.

C.